

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the status of the claims as indicated below:

Claims 1-9 (canceled)

10. (new) An apparatus for testing a patient's perception of hearing and for determining a correct amplification of a hearing aid prior to dispensation of the hearing aid to the patient, comprising:

a source for outputting a sound; and,

a plug fitable within an ear of a patient being tested for a hearing aid, said plug having a first tube for carrying said sound from said source into the ear of the patient and a second tube for venting the ear.

11. (new) The apparatus for testing a patient's perception of hearing and for determining a correct amplification of a hearing aid according to Claim 10, said plug being made of a resilient material for reducing occlusion, or feedback, in an ear canal of the patient.

12. (new) The apparatus for testing a patient's perception of hearing and for determining a correct amplification of a hearing aid according to Claim 11, wherein said resilient material is a foam material capable of being inserted into the ear canal of the patient and expandable for contacting a periphery of the ear canal for creating a flexible

feedback reducing seal.

13. (new) The apparatus for testing a patient's perception of hearing and for determining a correct amplification of a hearing aid according to Claim 10, wherein said source for outputting a sound includes means for emitting a plurality of prerecorded sounds.

14. (new) The apparatus for testing a patient's perception of hearing and for determining a correct amplification of a hearing aid according to Claim 10, wherein said second tube of said plug is made of a plastic having a wall thickness sufficient for eliminating sound distortion when said plug is placed in the ear of the patient.

15. (new) The apparatus for testing a patient's perception of hearing and for determining a correct amplification of a hearing aid according to Claim 10, wherein said second tube of said plug includes means for varying diameter and length for said second tube for optimizing its size and positioning within the ear of the patient.

16. (new) A method for testing a patient's perception of hearing and for determining a correct amplification of a hearing aid prior to dispensation of the hearing aid to the patient, comprising the steps of:

inserting a plug fitable within an ear of a patient being tested for a hearing aid, said plug having a first tube

for carrying sound from a source into the ear of the patient and a second tube for venting the ear;

attaching said first tube of said plug to a source for outputting a sound;

activating the source for outputting a sound so that the sound passes through said first tube of said plug and into the patient's ear;

measuring the patient's perception of the sound received through said first tube of said plug; and,

determining a correct amplification for a hearing aid to be worn by the patient in the ear being tested.